



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY BULLETIN



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CALIFORNIA FOOD HANDLER CARD LAW EFFECTIVE DATE: JULY 1, 2011

What you need to know:

What is the law about?

California has adopted the California Food Handler Card Law pursuant to SB 602 which was enacted into law in 2010.

Who is required to have a food handler card?

All food employees who prepare, store or serve food, must have a California Food Handler Card. This includes, but is not limited to:

- servers,
- chefs/ head chefs/ cooks/ head cooks
- bartenders
- hosts and hostesses who handle food

The following food employees may also need to have a California Food Handler Card:

- bussers
- supervisors (general manager, or managers)

Managers who already have a Food Protection Manager Certification don't need a California Food Handler Card.

When will the law be effective?

By law, food handlers hired before June 1, 2011 must have a food handler card by July 1, 2011. Food handlers hired on or after June 1, 2011 must have a food handler card on file within 30 days of hire.

How do you become certified?

You will have to take a basic food safety training course and passing a test with a score of 70 percent or better. Only three providers can issue a California Food Handler Card at this time:

- National Restaurant Association (ServSafe California Food Handler Program)
- ProMetric
- National Registry For Food Safety Professionals

Where are the cards accepted?

California Food Handler Cards are accepted everywhere in California except Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego counties where local programs already exist.

Who pays for the training?

The law does not require employers to pay for an employee's time and expense to take the training and test. The California Food Handler Card is the property of the employee, who can take it to another employer as long as the card is valid.

How long is the card valid?

Cards are valid for three years from the date of issuance. The employers must keep a copy on file.

Who enforces the law?

Local health departments enforce the law. From July 1, 2011 to January 1, 2012, Los Angeles County will be limited to education and notification for compliance.

Who is exempt from the law?

- temporary food facilities (food booths)
- certified farmers' markets
- commissaries
- grocery stores
- convenience stores
- licensed health care facilities
- mobile support units
- public and private school cafeterias
- restricted food service facilities
- retail stores where a majority of sales are from a pharmacy

For a complete list of exemptions, or additional questions visit us at

<http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh> or
<http://www.ccdeh.com>